

REMARKS

Amendments

Claims 24 and 26 have been amended to more clearly define the invention and to reflect amendments made in the parent International Application, PCT/US00/22448, of which the instant application is the designated U.S. national stage member. Support for amended claim 24 is found in the specification at page 5, lines 21-25.

Applicant submits that no new matter is introduced by any of the amendments.

Claims 24 and 26-Versions With Markings to Show Changes Made:

24. (Amended) An improved desalination process which comprises:

- (a) blending a first stream of softened salt water having a substantially reduced concentration of hardness ions with a second stream of untreated salt water containing a high concentration of hardness ions to form a feed to a desalination system, wherein the source of the first and second streams are different, and
- (b) passing the feed through the desalination system to form a water product of potable quality, wherein the improvement comprises the introduction of a feed of variable proportions of softened and untreated salt water to the desalination system to increase the top operating temperature of the system and increase recovery of potable water.

26. (Amended) The desalination process of claim 24, wherein the stream of softened salt water is brine containing water produced by the desalination system, and wherein the brine containing water is selected from the group consisting of reject, blowdown, distillate, and recycled brine.

CONCLUSION

Upon entry of this Preliminary Amendment, claims 1-26 are pending. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-26 are directed to patentable subject matter. Accordingly, Applicant requests allowance of the claims.

No fee should be due in connection with this Communication. However, if a fee is required, the Assistant Commissioner is authorized to charge the fee to Deposit Account No. 23-1703.

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Respectfully submitted,



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